MIOSHA Fact Sheet

Ladder Safety

Ladder use is an integral part of the construction industry. The proper use of ladders is imperative to providing a safe workplace for everyone. Below are a few key points in the safe use of ladders and requirements of Construction Standard Part 11, Fixed and Portable Ladders (Part 11, Fixed and Portable Ladders). It is vital that employers train their employees in the proper use and set-up of ladders and provide them with the right ladders to do the work safely.

Part 11, Fixed and Portable Ladders Rule 1112(1) states: "The employer shall provide a training program for each employee who uses a ladder. The program shall enable each employee to recognize hazards related to the ladder and shall train each employee in the procedures to be followed to minimize these hazards." Training shall include: the nature of fall hazards in the work area, the proper use and care of ladders, and the maximum intended load-carrying capacities of ladders that are used.

Key safety points when using portable ladders:

- Always select the correct ladder for the work being performed. Ensure the ladder is only used for its intended purpose. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Place the ladder on a substantial and stable base and secure to prevent accidental displacement.
- A portable ladder must be equipped with appropriate safety feet unless the ladder is secured against displacement.
- A portable extension ladder shall be set up so the horizontal distance from the top support to the base is ¼ of the vertical distance. In other words, for every 4-feet up the base should be 1-foot back.
- Ensure the ladder is kept clear of energized electrical lines. The minimum distance for metal ladders is 20 feet. Minimum distance for other than metal is 10 feet for up to 50kV and 0.4 inches per kV thereafter.
- Face the ladder while ascending or descending.
- Always center your body between the ladder rungs. Do not overreach.
- Make sure the ladder is extended at least three feet above an upper landing surface if you intend to use the ladder to access that upper level or secure the ladder against displacement and ensure that there is a handhold extending at least 3 feet above the landing to support employees as they climb on and off of the ladder.
- Never stand on the cap or top step of a step ladder, or the top two rungs of an extension ladder.
- Keep ladders clear of unlocked doorways.
- A manufactured portable metal ladder shall not be used for electrical work or where it is exposed to contact with electrical conductors.
- A step ladder shall not be used as a straight ladder by leaning it against a wall or other support.

For additional assistance, please contact the Construction Safety and Health Division at 517-284-7680 or the Consultation Education and Training Division at 517-284-7720. Construction Safety Standards can be viewed on the MIOSHA website at www.michigan.gov/mioshastandards.